

## Lessons Learned Record of Interview

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defining success</li> <li>• Early days of war planning</li> <li>• Team Dynamics</li> <li>• Standing up the Coalition</li> <li>• Standing up the ANSF</li> <li>• Interagency Coordination</li> </ul>				

### General Introductory Conversation

Many men in DC are "anti-women-at-the-table", especially if you're smarter than them. The problem with Leavenworth and the people surrounding Petraeus is that they were too academic, too theoretical. This administration, first with Susan Rice, too academic - not experienced. Marty Dempsey - not good. With them, it is all about numbers; numbers equal success. This was a problem under Bush and it is a problem under Obama. The Joint Forces Command learned to focus on effect, not quantity, because numbers are not everything. If you don't go into an operation with what you want to achieve, don't bother. You are going to fail.

[REDACTED] came in for building forces at the beginning. [REDACTED]  
 [REDACTED] Petraeus said, "I'm not happy with MINSTICI"

[REDACTED]  
 [REDACTED]

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Learning point here: if I don't know what x, y and z is, how can I do a, b and c? We are doing this again: President Obama doesn't have a goal with ISIS. We want to "degrade" ISIS? No, we want to destroy ISIS. Why is he saying degrade? As it is said, you can co-opt them, transform them, or kill them. Holbrooke said, "Sometimes you have to go to bed with war criminals to get things done, but sometimes you have to kill them." Obama can't swallow this. Robert Ford – he was good at this. Known for his work in Syria.

[Side conversation about how "killing your own" is unredeemable. This was in regards to how Muslims are horrified when Jews/Israelis kill Muslims, but are somehow less horrified when Muslim extremists are killing other Muslims.]

I have a general aversion to lessons learned programs that gather dust on the shelf. I am sick of Obama saying, "We're sick of war." Only 5% of Americans are involved in the war; it doesn't affect most Americans. If I were to write a book, its chapeau would be: "America goes to war without knowing why it does." We went in reflexively after 9/11 without knowing what we were trying to achieve. I would like to write a book about having a plan and an end game before you go in. I despise the phrase, "exit strategy," though. It implies that you can "walk away" without any ill effect. Rather, we should be saying, "Where do we want to be two years from now? Three years from now?" When I was working, my window was actually more like 6 months – my job was very current-based. But no one at the table was doing any long-term planning. (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) was building CSTC-A at the beginning and cared about numbers. [Mentioned (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) : they were better at quality]

### The early days of war planning

(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) got called to the Pentagon to already start building and planning political-military operations for the Afghan war.

(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

- [redacted]
- [redacted]
- [redacted]
- [redacted]
- [redacted]
- [redacted]
- [redacted]
- [redacted]

Eight days after 9/11, (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) one of the first planes out of Andrews headed to Uzbekistan to work on bases and overflight negotiations regionally. (b)(1) - (1.4)(d), (b)(3) [The deals were] not too hard [to negotiate]. My approach to negotiation is not to beat people up, but with Karimov, toughness was needed and respected. A big problem with our current diplomatic approach is that we never tailor our style when negotiating with individual countries; we use the same approach all around and this is not effective.

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(b)(3)

It was clear at this point that Josh Bolten couldn't care less about the war or terrorism; he was all about working arms deals with the Russians and Iran. The OSD crowd was terrible initially. I don't remember [who was running OSD], but Frank Miller was pivotal. He was with NSC at the time. [He's with the Scowcroft Group now.] Frank Lamb had not as much to do with this at the beginning.

(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

There were rumblings out of NATO. They declared Article 5 to defend the United States. NATO offered the U.S. whatever the U.S. wanted it to do. Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz and Feith did not understand that we couldn't do it alone. This decision to go it alone at first undermined what could have been the most comprehensive coalition in history. The Pentagon blew off NATO's offer and opted to go it alone. Countries were willing to offer assistance, but we needed to be willing to make their offers work. For instance, Germany wanted to go in, but they needed cover. The Danish wanted to help with their aircraft and well-trained, well-stocked military (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

Also, Peter Rodman was taking these late-night phone calls. There were a lot of political appointees at the time that were not willing to do the right thing, do this type of work. (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) started meeting with Armitage and Powell to plan how we would do this. We started forming a "coalition of the willing." Frank Miller at NSC and Condoleezza Rice kept insisting that we needed NATO. It took some convincing, but Bush finally came around to NATO. Cheney was not on board totally, but didn't fight it. Pentagon fought it. The key suggestion that turned the tides for partnership with NATO: "What if we dual-hat the U.S. commander to work with NATO?" At this point, a light bulb went off and the coalition came together.

### Coalition Comes Together

December 2001: the coalition began to coalesce. From January-February 2002, we really started building a coalition of the willing. Countries came out of the woodwork, especially those new to NATO and those aspiring to be in NATO. Dual-hatting was key because we didn't want other countries' rules of engagement to stop us from going forward how we wanted (this is all before ISAF). There weren't as many obstacles however as it originally was made to seem. For instance, Germany's rules of engagement were not as restrictive as they were presented. Not constitutionally prohibited.



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To do research, I went to each country before negotiating with them to meet with parliament members to understand where the leverage is, where the constraints are. We eventually ended up with U.S. Forces, NATO, and some U.S. forces blended with NATO. The dual-hatting was all worked out verbally over the phone; not recorded anywhere that I know of. The system at DOS where you need a ten-page memo for going to the bathroom was not how we operated.

### Team Dynamics

Under Wolfowitz and Armitage, we flowed well. We operated very personally, quickly and directly. Yes, we needed to clear certain decisions via cables, but we were not as restrictive about speaking with each other. More people were read-in for Afghanistan because we were a go-team at that point with a "one team, one fight" type of camaraderie. Whereas with Iraq, there were too many Pentagon leaks at that point so communication closed down.

[Side conversation: Interviewee had a debate with a retired 4-star general about whether it was institutions or persons that drove policy. General stood firmly on the institution side, while interviewee believes it is mainly people.]

At CENTCOM, Rumsfeld had to ask permission before talking with DOS. Wolfowitz and Armitage referred to State as a black hole. What was the deal? It may have been a Venus-Mars type thing. Whatever caused these feelings, it was visceral and present more during Iraq, but there during Afghanistan. There was contempt on a personal level. It was Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz and Feith versus DOS and Condi Rice. There was this swirl of personal contempt. [REDACTED] an NSC meeting with cabinet people. Condi was chairing and [REDACTED] to the meeting. I remember the way Rumsfeld talked to Condi: it was horrendous.

Joint Staff: good people, but huge separation between Joint Staff and OSD. Why? The military side had a job, and wanted to accomplish it. OSD was full of political appointees – slow-moving. Tommy Franks –very easy [to work with]. [Lt Gen] Mike DeLong – was deputy, easy. He was smart. The first who recommended PRTs for Afghanistan. He got it when no one else did.

### Standing up the Afghan Security Forces with the Coalition

Fall/Winter 2002: CENTCOM – Mike DeLong generated idea for PRTs. [Aside: In July/August 2002, Iraq planning had already started. Interviewee was "read-in" by then.] Afghanistan: need Afghan National Army, but there hadn't been an ANA before in its modern sense. Winter 2002: One night, in the middle of the night, Beth Jones asked me to write up how to stand up an Afghan Army. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] At this point, however, we had a continuing resolution and no money to pay the Afghan militia force. [REDACTED] (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

[REDACTED] The French knew how to do this and wanted to be involved. They paid the first two Afghan army brigades and we paid for their uniforms. Felipe Herrera at the French Embassy was key, and so was Jean-David Levitte– French ambassador to the U.S., Sarkozy advisor. Before CERT, couldn't get through continuing resolution and hadn't passed a defense budget. It was a hill problem. Talk to Paul Wolfowitz and Doug Feith about it for details.

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(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)



Always, I believe there's a way to fix the issue. There was a lot of hatred from the Department of State regarding success/"winning" in this situation. But I didn't understand this attitude because we were all working on the same goal. In regards to Afghanistan, we were presented with a problem: needed an Afghan National Army, had no money, and needed help. (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

there is a presidential visit coming up with the French and they have the experience and expertise in standing up militaries, so why don't we talk with them? Yes, things were held up with popsicles and Elmer's glue. A lot was done over the phone regarding these negotiations. pulled in by CENTCOM for help on this. This ticked off the bureaucratic, memo-writing types. But luckily Armitage liked out-of-the-box thinking. Dobbins didn't believe in reconciliation between the Taliban and Afghan government, but he did it anyway. My theory is always do your homework – so important. Never walk into a meeting naked.

The world needs U.S. leadership even if the U.S. doesn't think so. Obama has a hard time accepting this. We are representative of all past dynasties rolled into one. Obama doesn't want to accept this. Regarding ISAF, there was a fundamental misunderstanding that the EU could do something without the U.S. They can't, and this is not just because of money. They lack the training, education, methodology and will to have the right roles of engagement. The Danes have always had that will, however – great SOF guys. Also, surprisingly, Estonia; they have 3,000 guys but they are amazing, "heavy metal" fighters.

A second issue was that there was too much naming and shaming of Europeans under Bob Gates. Instead of telling these countries what they need to do for us, ask them what they *can* do. Ask France to train and Spain to bring in police forces – these are their strengths. You can't squeeze blood out of a turnip. It must be understood that there is no Chief of Defense that wants lots of dead soldiers. The number that qualifies as "lots" is much smaller for a small country like Estonia. So if you ask a country to do something they can't do, or can't do without very high risk, it's a no. If you ask, "What can we do to help you help us?" we win! They say yes.

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2007 - [ADM] Bill McRaven – stood up EUCOM staff for NATO. No one wanted to work under the Brits, the French, Belgium, US were preferred. The Brits are not good at making in with the locals. John Allen and McRaven were amazing. Fox Fallon – head of CENTCOM. SOCOM and SOCCENT – Where numbers and effect come into play and work across purposes. Czech example: [interviewee gave an example of how you have to work with what countries have and get creative to make what they have to offer work for your needs.] Czech: small military, small number of SOF guys (150). Initially, they offered all 150 guys, but then I asked how much time they would need out of theater. The answer was for every six months in theater, they would all need eight months out. So I asked, “Would you rather have the full Czech force for six months or have a smaller portion of the force consistently?” Czech says they could have 50 men there at all times for five consecutive rotations. U.S. ended up going with this option. If a country wants to do something to help, work with them to make it possible. We were talking past each other.

A similar issue happens with NATO in Afghanistan. Rotations for NATO in Afghanistan are not as long as U.S. rotations. Marines are in for eight months because of the high-intensity role they are in. NATO forces are in theater for six months, and that’s with a one-month orientation and a one-month PCS period. So it’s really more like a four month rotation – so what are we going to do with that? It doesn’t work – too much inconsistency.

**(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)** that the effect of this troop deployment structure on the Afghan army was terminal. They got to know each other, and then the foreign troops were gone. This is not a good mentorship model. What we need is less numbers and more consecutive or longer rotations.

In Iraq, this issue was fixed, or at least fixable – different players involved. **(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)** In Afghanistan, there was a huge disconnect. CENTCOM and EUCOM did not like each other very much. **(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)** served as go-betweens because they were not speaking with each other. A low was when **(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)** EUCOM flight plans from CENTCOM regarding French overflight because they refused to speak directly with each other. The issues between them were personal.

### Interagency Coordination

Yes [interagency coordination was driven by personal relationships]. The problem with 9/11 was that there was no way the Pentagon was going to allow the White House (with Cheney on their side) to let interagency work happen. There was NO way there was going to be a PDD to allow interagency collective to work on the issue; the Pentagon was in charge and didn’t want to give up the power. So to work across agencies, we had to rely on personal relationships to get things done. This was a big learning curve for the president.

On the political-military side, it was a big eye-opener for Gates that we could get European troops to do more than stand around. They have things they can do – use them.